



Water Quality NewsFlash

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Site-Specific Standards – Guidance describes methods for making changes to water quality objectives

– Municipal-type stormwater discharges, including those from Caltrans roadways, are required to control pollutants to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). In addition, stormwater runoff is required to not cause an exceedance of water quality standards.

In some limited circumstances, water quality standards (objectives) can be changed based on local conditions. These “site-specific objectives” use local information to adjust water quality objectives to account for their over- and under-protectiveness. Three USEPA-published procedures and a number of other procedures allowed by USEPA can be used. The most common is the *Water-Effect Ratio (WER) Procedure*, which adjusts objectives to account for a site’s water chemistry. The *Recalculation Procedure* adjusts objectives on the basis of the assemblage of species in the water at a particular site, and the *Resident Species Procedure* accounts for site water chemistry plus the assemblage of resident species. Posted at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/quality.html> Page down to: “Site Specific Water Quality Objectives.”

State Implementation Policy – Revised version becomes final – Earlier this year, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) revised the *Policy for the Implementation of Toxics Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays and Estuaries* (aka State Implementation Policy or SIP). The Office of Administrative Law and U.S. EPA have now approved it and the changes are final. The SIP describes how the state will implement the water quality objectives for toxic pollutants which are listed in EPA’s *California Toxics Rule (CTR)*. The CTR includes objectives (called criteria by EPA) for inland surface waters, enclosed bays, and estuaries. For example, the SIP describes how dilution factors may be used in calculating effluent limitations based on the objectives in the CTR.

One change in the new SIP makes it easier to use Water Effect Ratios (WER), which are a method of creating site-specific objectives to replace those in the CTR (see preceding item). The second significant change removes one of the triggers for determining when effluent limits for a pollutant are needed in a permit. This trigger occurred whenever the ambient water quality exceeded a water quality objective. The trigger now applies only when the pollutant is also present in the effluent. The SIP does not apply to stormwater; the SWRCB plans to develop a similar document that does address stormwater. SIP: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/iswp/siprev.html>

Transportation Bill – Stormwater provisions modified – The *Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA)* is now law. The Senate version had required states to set aside 2% of their federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for a Stormwater Discharge Mitigation Program. This provision was eliminated from the final bill. The current law, as well as the new law, allows a State to use STP funds for environmental restoration and pollution abatement projects (including the retrofit or construction of stormwater treatment systems). <http://www.house.gov/rules/109textTEALU.htm>

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